

point where these forces
favorable results.

The basic indicators as to the trend of events are favorable to our efforts. These indicators include the trend in total areas controlled by the Communists and the South Vietnamese forces; the trend in defections from the Communists to the South Vietnamese; the casualty ratios between the Communists and the South Vietnamese and the progress being so demonstrably achieved in President Diem's strategic hamlet strategy.

The strategic hamlet strategy is basic to the entire war in South Vietnam. It involves, as I know you are aware, the concentration of the populace in fortified and defended villages. This has a twofold effect:

First, the protection of the people from Communist terrorism; and second, the depriving of the Communists of sources of food supply, arms, and personnel for impressment into their military and supporting forces.

In the course of our visit in South Vietnam, Mr. Lombardo and I visited several strategic hamlets. These, I would like to point out, were not in the Saigon area where the most immediate results might be expected but rather in the forested high plateau country. The strategic hamlet program I was reliably informed, has progressed in a most satisfactory manner and in some areas is almost 90 percent completed. This represents a most significant achievement on the part of President Diem's government.

I might mention also that one of the most significant and potentially decisive developments in South Vietnam has been the relatively recent swing of the Montagnard tribes to the pro-U.S. government of President Diem. The Montagnards are an aborigine—probably Malay—derivation people, totaling between probably 400,000 or 600,000, inhabiting the high plateau forest area, along the Laotian and Cambodian borders of South Vietnam.

These Montagnards have been wooed by the Reds with promises and inducements because of their importance in the ultimate outcome of this struggle. However, the Montagnards are giving their support to the Diem government in increasingly large numbers. There are two reasons for this: The terrorist tactics of the Reds have boomeranged; and the far-sighted sound policies of President Diem's government, with U.S. advice and assistance, are gaining the confidence and allegiance of the Montagnards.

These tribesmen are intimately acquainted with Red infiltration routes along the Laotian and Cambodian borders. They are natural guerrilla fighters. Although many of them have hunted only with a cross bow, they respond quickly, as was evident during our visit to a Montagnard training base, to modern weapons and military organization. Their support of the anti-Communist government of President Diem constitutes a genuinely serious setback for the Reds.

One of the most interesting but not surprising aspects of what is going on in South Vietnam is the truly magnificent service being performed by the U.S. Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force personnel in that area.

I was particularly impressed by the enthusiasm, tireless efforts, and high level of professional competence of the military advisory team No. 33 which we visited in Da Nang. This is an area of the primitive Montagnard tribes, and one in which the guerrilla warfare is bitter. To U.S. military personnel, who are living under austere standards, have gained the confidence of the South Vietnamese regulars and the Montagnards. For instance, one of the U.S. Army advisers working with Montagnards has constructed a bamboo waterwheel, a small, but very important local agricultural school. As rudimentary as this bamboo waterwheel is, it is a completely new device to the Montagnards, who marvel at it.

to lift water a few feet from a small stream and irrigate the vegetable gardens and banana groves. Such ingenuity and sincere interest on the part of the U.S. personnel is typical of the contributions which our forces are making both in specific military matters as well as in economic and social endeavors. All of my conversations in Vietnam with personnel of various ranks, I did not hear any complaints or griping as to the duties being performed by them. If I judge the fighting men correctly, they have no regrets about those who are urging "bring our boys home" from South Vietnam. Our military personnel there know the importance of what they are doing, the necessity, from the standpoint of U.S. security and that of the free world, of winning this war, and are effectively going about the job of gaining this objective.

It is only realistic, of course, to recognize that although the tide is beginning to turn in favor of South Vietnam, the road to a final going to a long, laborious, and bloody one. In 1962, for instance, the South Vietnamese forces suffered 10,000 casualties. However, significant, it is estimated that the Communists suffered 20,000 casualties.

Based upon my observations of the fighting spirit, and effectiveness of the forces, the remarkable progress being made with the strategic hamlet strategy, and the trends of the conflict, I believe it is reasonable to conclude that if we continue our determined effort in South Vietnam, the Communist aggression in that area can be defeated.

There is no doubt of some assistance to the South Vietnamese.

J. D. HITTLE.

Brig. Gen. J. D. Hittle: Tide in Vietnam Is Turning in Our Favor

EXTENSION OF REMARKS

HON. L. MENDEL RIVERS

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 3, 1963

Mr. RIVERS of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, a distinguished, courageous Marine Corps veteran has provided at my request a first-hand report of the bitter war in South Vietnam.

Brig. Gen. J. D. Hittle, U. S. Marine Corps, retired, declares that the United States can beat the Communist if we do not falter in this desperate struggle for control of Vietnam—considered by many to be a key country in the control of southeast Asia.

Mr. Speaker, under leave to extend my remarks to the Appendix of the Record, I hereby insert his report for the information of the Congress:

Hon. L. MENDEL RIVERS,
Chairman, Subcommittee No. 1, Armed Services Committee, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: This is in response to your request that I provide you with a few of my observations of the situation in South Vietnam. These observations, as you will recall, are based upon my recent visit to South Vietnam, in company with Mr. Joseph Lombardo, Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. On the basis of my observations both in Saigon and in the outer country area, and as a result of my conversations with United States and South Vietnamese military personnel and civilians, it is my firm impression that the tide has begun to turn in our favor in this bitter war in South Vietnam. If the United States does not falter in the stretch, we can win this struggle, and it is a struggle which we cannot, from the standpoint of sheer national security, afford to lose.

It is evident that the tremendous effort over the past couple of years by the United States and by the South Vietnamese Government of President Diem has reached the